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The Passage to Somnium Dissulto: A Performance Thesis

Skyler McNulty

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DANC 461: Senior Thesis Project

The Passage to Somnium Dissulto
A Performance Thesis

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Mentors:
Professor Judith Scalin
Professor Scott Heinzerling

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The Passage to Somnium Dissulto
A Performance Thesis

Table of Contents

I.	About the Artist	pp.1-5
	a. Curriculum Vitae	pp. 1-3
	b. Job Resume	p. 4
	c. Headshot	p. 5
II.	The Performance Thesis	pp. 6-12
	a. Thesis Overview	p. 6
	b. Introductory Material	pp. 7-12
	c. Weekly Journals	pp. 13-18
III.	Artistic Analysis	pp. 19-37
	a. Overall Analysis	pp. 19-29
	b. Self Analysis	pp. 30-35
	c. Conversation with the Choreographer	pp. 36-37
IV.	Appendices	pp. 38-40
	a. <i>Somnium Dissulto</i> Performance DVD	p. 38
	b. <i>Somnuim Dissulto</i> Photographs	pp. 39-40
V.	Dance Research	pp. 41-49
	a. Dance In Medicine	pp. 41-49
VI.	Course Reflections	pp. 50-55
	a. Summary of Dance Studies	pp. 50-55
VII.	Developing An Aesthetic	pp. 56-60
	a. Aesthetic Statement	pp. 56-60
VIII.	Post-Graduate Work	p. 61
	a. Career Search	p. 61

The Passage to Somnium Dissulto
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The Passage to Sonmium Dissulto: a Performance Thesis is the study of the learning styles and learning patterns of individual dancers throughout a rehearsal and composition process with choreographer Mark Tomasic. It identifies students' strengths, weaknesses, and individual roles as technical dancers and performers in a large ensemble. "The Passage to Sonmium Dissulto" allowed the dancers to identify specific rehearsal and performance goals and fears through a series of journals written meticulously throughout the thesis process. The students fully engaged in a unique performance thesis process and were able to critically analyze the successes and challenges of dancers participating in a concert dance performance.

The Passage to Somnium Dissulto: A Performance Thesis

Introductory Material

The dance I am in: *Somnium Dissulto*, choreographed by: Mark Tomasic

Mark Tomasic: Biography

Los Angeles based choreographer, dancer and educator Mark Tomasic discovered a passion for movement when he began college. The interconnectedness of movement and human potential continue to fuel his work and shape his artistic vision. As a choreographer, Tomasic's work has been noted to be "wry and wicked", "visually compelling", as well as "wistful", "touching" and "poetic". Tomasic has created numerous self-produced works as well as works for Verb Ballets, Dancing Wheels Company & School, Laguna Dance Festival, Ashland Regional Ballet, Belhaven University, MN² Productions, University of California, Irvine and Santa Monica College. As a performer, Mark has worked with a variety of renowned dance companies including Ballet Contemporáneo de Buenos Aires, Cleveland San Jose Ballet, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, Tom Evert Dance Company, The Dancing Wheels Company & School, and Verb Ballets. Mark's belief in the power of dance to transform lives and awaken human potential is rooted in his extensive work in the field of physically integrated dance with the Dancing Wheels Company & School, one of the premier arts and disability organizations in the

United States. He currently serves as Artistic Adviser to the Company and travels nationally and internationally to teach physically integrated dance to students and professionals alike. Mark is the author of "Physically Integrated Dance: The Dancing Wheels Comprehensive Guide for Teachers, Choreographers and Students of Mixed Abilities" (2012), a first-of-its-kind training manual that bridges artistic and scientific disciplines in the creation of an inclusive modern dance curriculum for dancers with and without disabilities. Mark holds an MFA in Dance from the University of California, Irvine and a BFA in Ballet from the University of Cincinnati – College Conservatory of Music. Mark is currently a full-time faculty member at Santa Monica College.

Mark Tomasic's Aesthetic:

Mark Tomasic is really interested in choreography based upon improvisation. The majority of the movement he creates is inspired from student exploration. He asks his cast to form phrases and places the phrases into the piece like you would a puzzle. Mark likes to allow the movement speaks for itself. He has a single concept but no particular end vision for the piece. He aims to allow the movement to evoke an emotion. For example, Mark originally thought the piece was going to exude joy, but as the movement was placed together, the mood was ultimately more somber and melancholy.

The Intension of the Dance:

In this piece, we are students trapped in a boarding school. We are the children that never have the opportunity to leave the gated community. We are constantly looking for a way out, and there are many moments of hope and others of failure. With each trail and error we come closer to the way out. By the end of the piece, we are able to find a way out of the static place that we have existed in for a long while.

The Structure of the Dance:

Music-Mozart: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Number of Dancers-23

Production Elements- Lighting

Length- Approximately 14 minutes

My role in the dance:

I am one of the many boarding students in the piece. I dance in all the ensemble sections. There are many parts in the dance where I am in the front and the dancers behind depend on me to know and execute the dance accurately and in time with the music.

Strengths as a technical dancer I bring to the work:

I bring my technical dance training to the work. I have been dancing in a competitive environment since the age of seven and have modern dance experience also. There are many members of the cast that do not have technical training so my training comes in handy when helping those with less dance experience learn the correct movements. It also helps that I trained under Mark for a year in college. It was much easier to pick up his modern vocabulary because of my previous experience.

Challenges as a technical dancer in the work:

It is hard to stay patient with the members of the cast with less dance experience. There are many times when we have to review simple choreography many times in order to accommodate to the lower leveled dancers. Also, the cast is so large and the levels are so varied that it is hard to stay together as a unit during the synchronized sections of the piece.

Strengths as a performer I bring to the work:

I have a lot of performance experience. I have always loved being on stage. My performance consistency is a definite strength. I can always be counted on to know the choreography. Also, my storytelling ability is a definite strength. I am a very emotional dancer, and when the lights and the music come on stage, the emotion that the piece is supposed to portray comes very naturally.

Challenges as a performer I bring to the work:

I sometimes struggle with being in the moment through tech and lighting rehearsals. It is a challenge to stay focused and positive when I sit around for extended periods of time. It is hard for me to get back in the performance mode after the long breaks in stage rehearsals.

What I want to learn?

I want to learn more about how to work in a group with a wide variety of levels. It is really hard for me to take into consideration the struggles of the less advanced dancers so I would really like to learn how to be a positive influence to them and their dancing capabilities.

What are my goals?

My goal is to try to get Mark's choreographic vision across to a number of audiences. I would like to find commonalities with each cast member. I want to be able to learn from the other dancers as well as inspire them to reach personal goals as well.

What are my fears?

My fear is that Mark's piece is going to look messy and out of control. There are so many dancers on stage at once and it is really hard to stay together. Especially, because each dancer has a different quality of movement. Mark never specified the exact way the movements should look so there are many variations. This could either be a positive and effective choreographic style or it could look sloppy and the theme could be misinterpreted.

The Passage to Somnium Dissulto: A Performance Thesis

Weekly Journals

September 26, 2013

Today was my first rehearsal with Mark Tomasic. I was not able to make the first two rehearsals due to work conflicts so it was kind of intimidating walking into the room. I felt lost watching every dancer execute their own movement phrase. It was then explained to me that the prior weeks, the dancers had been working on movement based upon words that were assigned to each individual. They explored performing these as individuals and in duets. However, I was fortunate because Mark had not started putting the movement together in set choreography yet. After everyone had finished demonstrating their phrase we started the dance. We started with a walking phrase and Mark incorporated the first duet into the phrase. Then, we put a phrase that the group explored in prior rehearsals into a ripple pattern. It was very abstract movement with a comedic feeling. I was unsure how it is going to come across to an audience, but I will keep an open mind. He also added a portion of Caroline's solo that goes excellent with the portion of the music where she executes the movement. The

rehearsal went by very quickly. It was not as challenging as I thought it would be and I really enjoy spending time with my fellow senior class.

October 3, 2013

Today consisted of a lot more sitting around. The time seemed to go by very slowly. Mark focused a lot on composing duets and trios out of certain individuals movement phrases. Due to the fact I did not make a movement phrase I was not included in this process. We did learn one floor section, which was interesting. There are so many of us at different levels of dance so everyone catches on to the movement at a different pace. We have repeated a lot of the same movement so far, so this makes it a little easier for the less experienced dancers to execute the dance.

October 10, 2013

Today we learned a lot of choreography. We did not learn any new movement material, we just rearranged the movement we already learned in previous rehearsals. We are more than halfway through with the dance and it seems to be coming together well. More individuals such as Kendra and Taylor have solos part but I remain in the core group of dancers due to my absence. I was really tired today and I had a really bad groin injury that prevented me from

dancing full out. It is frustrating having to take it easy when I know a lot of dancers count on me to know what I am doing because I am one of the more advanced dancers.

October 17, 2013

Today we finished the dance. It was such an exceptional feeling. The conclusion of the piece fits perfectly with the rest of the piece. There is now a definite story and meaning behind the movement now. Brian was also back from an extended absence due to other obligations and he received a solo that really enhances the section of the dance where it occurs. We added on a duet; everyone learned the movement but it looked very hectic. So instead only one pair is going to do the movement. I had to leave an hour early from rehearsal to pick up my mom from the airport. It was hard to concentrate throughout rehearsal today because I was just so excited.

October 31, 2013

We started today by talking about the meaning behind the dance. We are all students trapped in the walls of a boarding school. We are never allowed out but that does not mean that we are not constantly looking for a way to escape. There are certain moments in the piece where we think we have found a possible

escape but hope is lost and the somber feeling of the piece continues. At the end, we all finally find a way out and we are free from the confines of the school grounds. After we talked about the storyline we began to clean the dance. We missed a week of rehearsal due to Mark's show opening so we felt refreshed and ready to work. Everyone took direction very well. We cleaned the two major sections of dancing, which were the "monster phrase" as Mark named it and the floor part. We went over head directions and body facing. The music is very hard to count so that posed a slight problem in the cleaning process because every dancer heard the music differently. After the cleaning process, I feel much better about the choreography; the dance is coming together fairly well.

November 7, 2013-Spacing

We had our first rehearsal on stage for spacing today. It was weird being on stage already. The process went by so quickly. We did not have that many rehearsals but the dance feels good on stage. The cast is so big it took a long time to space the entire dance out on stage. However, in the moments of quiet it was really fun that we were able to interact with one another on stage. The wings were not up and the floor was not installed so we were not allowed to do the choreography full out. Once we marked the dance on stage we went back to the studio for more cleaning. We cleaned the partner section and it is starting to look much better. I was really tired and did not feel well today so it was hard to

listen to all the notes and corrections. I somehow managed to push through and I am confident we will look better at tech.

November 15, 2013

Tech rehearsal went smoothly. The lighting process was long as always and we were sitting around for extended periods of time. I did not have a costume so it did not fully feel like tech. But when we did the dance with Johnny's lighting the piece came together really nicely. The lighting really enhances the story. The light that shines down from the audience during Brian's solo is very effective. Mark gave us notes but nothing drastic for the first time. The only thing that was still off is the last time we dance the floor sequence. A lot of dancers are still confused with the timing. It was really fun to dance with our coats finally. The end is now my favorite part. Being able to hand out jackets allows me to connect with the other dancers. Rachel and I are very enthusiastic but we are supposed to tame down the theatrics for the show.

Showtime

After tech and dress rehearsal I felt really comfortable executing the choreography to the best of my ability. It was really fun to finally have an audience. It gave me a new sense of happy energy. I did not feel somber at all,

instead I was happy and loved being on stage with all my fellow seniors. The piece went by so quickly and it seemed very together. There was an energy that extended through every dancer and out into the audience. I had a blast in my last faculty concert. It was a great experience; one that I will cherish forever; especially the small moments on stage that only the cast understood and appreciated.

Overall Analysis

The stage is dark and classical music starts to play four approximately fifteen seconds. You begin to see indistinguishable shadows in the center of the stage as the lights start to rise. A direct light begins to light up the stage and the shadows become more distinguishable; it is a mass of legs walking in uneven patterns. A few more seconds pass, the lights brighten, and a cluster of dancers is revealed. They are all hunched over, walking in uneven patterns as if they have been walking for hours. There is a ripple from left to right in the crowd; the bodies rise and fall as if they are taking a deep breath. The music picks up and the dancers' freeze. There are accents every two counts in the music and with each sound a dancer rises from the crowd quickly, throwing their body and head back as if gasping for air, then each dancer rejoins the crowd in the hunched position. This happens to four different dancers. Then, two dancers rise from the crowd and throw their bodies and head back as if gasping for air, just like the other dancers. However, these dancers seem a bit more frantic. As the two dancers rejoin the crowd in the hunched position, another pair of dancers execute the same movement. Immediately following, there is another ripple through the crowd, this time from right to left as the light turns blue. A dancer on the right steps out of the crowd, moving her arms as if moving something out of the way. She then steps back into the crowd while fixing her hair. The dancer keeps her head down, making it appear that she is scared of something. Another ripple starts from the left side; this time it is a quick four counts. When the ripple reaches the right side, it immediately reverses from

right to left for four counts. The movement almost looks like it is being rewound. Two more pairs throw their bodies into the air quickly. Then the entire crowd drops to a squatted position revealing one sole dancer in the back right corner standing in a pool of blue light. The dancers come back to standing and drop again into the same squatting position revealing two dancers standing, one in the center and one towards the left of the clump. They rise and fall again leaving a single dancer in the front right left standing. The single dancer drops to a squat as the clump rises. Then the clump joins the dancer in the squatted position and they lie on their backs with their knees bend, feet on the floor, and one arm up; there is one dancer towards the right of the clump left standing. The dancers on the floor begin to move their arm in an "S" shaped pattern; making it appear that the dancer standing is moving in some kind of field. The standing dancer's movement is very gestural. Her head is turns to the back often, making it seem that she is scared of something ahead of her. Another dancer crawls out from the left side of the clump. She remains on her knees and moves with her head down. There is a loud accent in the music and all the dancer begin to move abruptly. The dancers frantically start removing their jackets, revealing uniforms, and while facing the back, begin to throw their jackets up in the air. The jackets are left in a pile at the back of the stage, and the dancers begin to run to the left side of the stage; forming a line, two or three dancers wide, from the front of the stage to the back. The dancers in the front start a movement phrase. They stop as if not wanting to step on something, then search for something on their body. They turn around and appear to be throwing something to the center of the stage. These movements are executed in a ripple from the front to the back; the dancers constantly appear to be searching for something. The

gestural phrase continues and then comes to the close as the dancers turn around to a sitting position facing the back. Three dancers log roll away from the line towards the center of the stage. They stay in a line, one right behind the other. The dancer in the center of the line rises and reaches back to the lines of dancers on the left side of the stage, and then the dancers roll back to the left and rejoin the group. When all three dancers have returned, a single dancer on the front right stands and faces the front. She executes similar gestural movement, this time she looks and reaches to the left as if grasping for something, then stares at her hands as they circle into the air and focuses on her hands as she brings them back down; this phrase emphasizes circular movements; she seems to be longing for something. A new phrase of music begins and the dancers all stand and join the dancer facing the front. The dancers begin to walk in the same uneven pattern as they did in the beginning. However, this time they are standing with their arms crossed over their body; as if cold or trying to cover something. The dancers begin to lean to the right two at a time and run to the opposite side of the stage and end facing the right back corner. This is also a ripple that starts in the front and continues until every dancer has reached the right side of the stage. One dancer runs to the middle of the stage and begins to dance. The movement has a wide kinesphere and the limbs are straight and stretched throughout the movement. She slices her straight arms across the center of the body, and then swings the arms in a circular movement to a bent over position with the arms back and the head down. The right arm raises as the dancer hinges backward, and then the arms windmill to bring the body back to a standing position. The dancer prepares and does a double outside pencil turn, then raises the arms straight up above the head and finishes the turn in a

lunge with the body contracted over. She falls to the ground and the cluster of dancers on the right throw their arms into the air in four different groups, then all arch into a backbend with arms up in the air. The solo dancer begins to crawl towards the crowd as their fingers begin to move. Then she crawls away and does a back-roll to the knees. The soloist then throws her head up with her hands covering her ears, then shifts her weight and kicks one leg in a second tilt. The clump executes another rippled movement phrase and end in a sitting position facing the center of the stage. While this is occurring the soloist appears to be drawing something on the floor then rises and tucks her knee into her chest then pushes the leg into a rond de jambe arabesque. She turns to the front and moves her head with her hand from one side to the other. She then glissades and rolls back to the clump. Two dancers from the clump rise and start dancing. The movement is gestural again; as if they are telling a story. The dancers on the floor begin to crawl backwards off-stage. These two dancers finish their phrases and sit-down to crawl off-stage with the rest of the crowd. Two more dancers rise and begin moving; these dancers are the first pair to really interact with each other. These dancers finish, sit down, and continue to crawl backwards off-stage. One dancer who is nearly off stage gets up and run to the front left corner of the stage. Soon two more dancers join her. They are the only three dancers left on stage and their movement is much more frantic than the previous movement. Dancers start to appear from the front left wing; they are still crawling backwards. The three dancers run to the front right side of the stage as the dancers crawling spread over the entire stage. One dancer runs around the stage, weaving through the other dancers on the ground. The dancers begin a unison movement phrase on the ground. The dancers throw their heads up with

their hands covering their ears, then shift their weight and kick one leg in a second tilt. They then appear to be drawing something on the floor then rise and tuck their knee into their chest then they push the leg into a rond de jambe arabesque. The dancers all turn to the front and move their heads with their hand from one side to the other. The dancers drop to the floor all at once, then quickly stand up and face the back right corner, then sit back on the floor sporadically. One dancer stays standing and begins to move slowly, then incorporated jumps into the angular movements. While she is dancing, the dancers on the floor gradually lay on their backs then roll to their stomachs. As a new phrase of movement begins, the dancers on the floor return to their backs with their feet in the air and begin to walk; as if walking on air. Two dancers stand and begin to dance in unison. The two dancers return to the ground, and all legs return to the ground as the music phrase changes. Facing the back, all the dancers begin to rise from the ground slowly. The only boy in the group stays at first on the ground and then begins to move bigger. It is frantic movement and much less ridged than the prior solos. The dancers facing the back begin to lean and run off stage one at a time. The dancers exit both sides, but all re-enter from the back left corner. They run to the boy soloist who is still frantically moving, making a line across the front of the stage. The dancers watch the boy as he points to a light coming from above the audience. The dancers begin a movement motif again. They move their fingers in front of their eyes and move into a squat. Then they stop as if not wanting to step on something, then search for something on their body. Then they turn around and appear to be throwing something to the center of the stage. They step back and turn to the back reaching their arms up to the diagonals. As this phrase occurs, gradually more and more dancers stop to look at

the light. The light disappears and the dancers walk to back of the stage. Three dancers are left and execute the phrase emphasizing straight limbs, then crawl backwards of the stage. They slice their straight arms across the center of the body, then swing the arms in a circular movement to a bent over position with the arms back and the head down. The right arm rises as the dancers hinge backward, and then the arms windmill to bring the body back to a standing position. The dancers prepare and execute a double outside pencil turn, then raise the arms straight up above the head and finish the turn in a lunge with the body contracted over. The three dancers trop to the ground and begin to crawl off stage as the dancers left standing in the back throw their arms up into the air and one dancer in the center arches into a backbend. She begins to walk forward and away from the group in this position. She begins to dance in a calm way that emphasizes the use of her legs. It is the most technically driven movement that has been seen throughout the dance. The dancers at the back of the stage shift into a clump. They begin to execute a gestural phrase to the back. The dancers look and reach to the right as if grasping for something, then stare at their hands as they circle into the air and focus on their hands as they bring them back down; this phrase emphasizes circular movements. The cluster breaks off into pairs and the dancers execute short duets simultaneously. The entire group begins a gestural phrase on their knees. This is the first time all the dancers have been in unison for an extended amount of time. Once the phrase is completed, the dancers quickly roll off to both sides of the stage and one dancer is left on stage. She uses the space well, and her movement is wide and expansive. The dancers run from all curtains to join the soloist on stage. The dancers execute the same movement with a wide kinesphere and

straight and stretched limbs throughout the movement, but this time are all facing different directions. They slice their straight arms across the center of the body, then swing the arms in a circular movement to a bent over position with the arms back and the head down. The right arm rises as the dancers hinge backward, and then the arms windmill to bring the body back to a standing position. The dancers prepare and execute a double outside pencil turn, then raise the arms straight up above the head and finish the turn in a lunge with the body contracted over. Dancers then make their way to the floor and perform the phrase where it appears that they are drawing something on the floor. They all stand up slowly and face the front left diagonal and walk in uneven steps. One dancer is frantically running around and occasionally others try to stop her. The music changes and the dancers abruptly stop moving and look to the front right corner. A duet begins on the floor and the dancers watch the story unfold. When the duet is finished, the dancers slowly return their heads to the right corner where the solo that emphasized circular movements is executed again. She looks and reaches to the back left corner as if grasping for something, then stares at her hands as they circle into the air and focuses on her hands as she brings them back down. The dancers at the back of the room begin to walk toward the soloist, pushing those in front of them. The crowd makes it to the soloist and drags her to the middle of the stage. The dancers execute the same circular phrase in unison until a single dancer breaks free from the center of the crowd. The dancers stop to watch event that just occurred and then all disperse in a frantic and unorganized manner. The music changes and the dancers face front and walk in a uniform square pattern, then perform the phrase that emphasizes the wide kinesphere and straight and stretched limbs throughout the movement. They slice their

straight arms across the center of the body, then swing the arms in a circular movement to a bent over position with the arms back and the head down. The right arm rises as the dancers hinge backward, and then the arms windmill to bring the body back to a standing position. The dancers prepare and execute a double outside pencil turn, then raise the arms straight up above the head and finish the turn in a lunge with the body contracted over. The dancers drop to the ground and throw their heads up with their hands covering their ears, then shift their weight and kick one leg in a second tilt. They then appear to be drawing something on the floor then rise and tuck their knee into their chest then they push the leg into a rond de jambe arabesque. The dancers all turn to the front and move their head with their hand from one side to the other. Then all the dancers seem to have a realization and stand up. They begin to grab their jackets from the back of the room and converse with one another. The music ends and all the dancers exit the stage casually, interacting with one another, and the lights fade.

The music entitled "Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart" was full of highs and lows. It had many different sections, each that were dramatically different. Different ideas in the music would resurface many times, making it a good piece of music to incorporate motif into. The music was very suiting to the theme of the dance. The classical music matched the cleanliness of the uniforms. The way the choreographer matched the movement to the music was very strategic. Every new choreographic idea was presented when there was a definite change in the music. The dance evolved with the music. As the music got bigger, the movement got more frantic. There were times when the dancers seemed to actually be playing the instruments with their bodies. The music allowed the student to tell a story.

The production values greatly enhanced the appearance of the dance. The lighting made the piece have a very dramatic feel. The use of blue light highlighted the costuming and also added to the mood. The costuming gave a story-like feel to the dance. The Catholic school uniforms made the dancers appear as a connected unit and were easy to relate to. The use of entrances and exits also enhanced the work. The dancers would all exit from one side of the stage and enter from the other. This made the cast seem very large and powerful. The elements all came together to form a piece of art that had a lasting impact on the audience.

Somnium Dissulto was a modern piece. It incorporated many of the basic elements of modern that exist in well know techniques. The emphasis on gestural movement is an example of a traditional modern element. There were also very abstract movements. Each and every movement seemed to be telling a story that could be interpreted differently by every audience member. There were many different movement qualities that appeared. Some movements had a wide kinesphere, and were very open; this allowed the audience to form a connection to the story. There were also very internal movements where the dancers looked down; this gave the audience the idea that the dancers were somber or feared something. There was a lot of phrase work done facing the back, this gave the audience the feeling and a sense that the dancers were acting from defiance. The movement itself was not intricate, but it allowed the audience to form a story and the dancing was very easy to attach an emotion to.

The dancers in *Somnium Dissulto* were of all different technical backgrounds. You could tell this through their movement quality and ease of movement, especially in

the synchronized sections. The dance was not very technically demanding; it was made up of many gestural phrases and motifs. There was not a broad movement vocabulary. This made it easier for the large cast to stay together as a unit. There was one phrase that was more technically demanding. It consisted of a double pencil turn and a rond de jambe arabesque. Dancers were challenged to balance on their supporting leg for an extended period of time. There was no room to bobble because there were dancers spread across the floor. Some solo parts had a bit of technique added to them. There were some jumps incorporated while the rest of the cast was on the floor. This made for an effective use of levels and gave the piece a more dynamic feel. There were also extensions used throughout the solos. This added cleanliness to the dance. The precision and placement of the legs in développé contrasted the different movements that were being executed in the large group. As the movement got bigger, the lack of technical skills was easier to be seen. However, accompanied by the change in music, the chaotic feel of the movement seemed like a choreographic choice and did not take away from the piece itself; in many ways it added to the depth of the piece.

The piece required an amazing amount of performance demands. The dancers were challenged to tell a story that the audience could understand. The movements were very minimal at times so they were challenged to enhance the story through expression. The dancers took every chance to interact with each other and this helped progress the story. By the end of the piece, the dancers were so invested in their character that you began to believe they were actually students interacting within a

Catholic school. The performance quality of the dancers was a definite strength in the dance.

Somnium Dissulto made an impact on the audience. The piece definitely succeeded in taking the audience on a journey. The choreography and costuming set a scene that was easy to follow and the story unraveled seamlessly. This was successful because the intension of the storyline was simplistic and clear. The technique was good at times, especially during the solo sections. In times of group unison, the technique was a little weak. This could be due to the large amount of dancers with different technical backgrounds. Although the technique could have been improved in many parts of the dance, the dancers did an amazing job with the performance aspect of the piece. The dancers were able to capture many emotions that went along with the theme of the piece. They showed many moments of fear, anxiety, struggle, indecisiveness and many other effective emotions.

Self-Analysis

Being a part of *Somnium Dissulto* was full of ups and downs. There were high points filled with laughter and connecting with the other dancers in the piece. There were also moments when I felt down and disappointed. However, through all of these times I was growing in my body, mind and spirit.

I grew in my body as I learned a new movement style. I was able to bring my technical dance training to the work and catch on to the choreography quickly. There were many members of the cast that did not have much technical training so I was able to help those who had a more difficult time picking up choreography learn the correct movements. Although I was often willing to help others, it was difficult at times to stay patient with the members of the cast with less dance experience. There were many times when we had to review simple choreography multiple times in order to accommodate to the lower leveled dancers. However, thinking back on this, I became much more I tuned with the movements and it became second nature to many dancers and myself. This made the piece easier to clean because at most times of the dance we were pretty synchronized. The more technical parts of the dance got a bit disorganized and due to the large cast size and various levels are so varied that it is hard to stay together as a unit during these sections of the piece.

My mind grew tremendously throughout this process. It made me really think about my performance qualities and what elements make for a success dance.

Somnium Dissulto had a storyline that we as dancers had to portray. In this piece, we

were students trapped in a boarding school. We were the children that never have the opportunity to leave the gated community. We were constantly looking for a way out, and there are many moments of hope and others of failure. With each and every trail and error we came closer to the way out. By the end of the piece, we were able to find a way out of the static place that we had existed in for a long while. Before this piece, I had a lot of performance experience. I have always loved being on stage, and my performance consistency has always been a definite strength. However, I had never been challenged to dance as if I was telling a complete story from beginning to end. There was a introduction, body and conclusion to the piece which fit perfectly with the intension of the dance. This allowed the definite story and meaning behind the movement to be clear.

We were also challenged as dancers to form our own movement vocabulary. The majority of the movement was influenced by gestures that the dancers designed to portray an emotion, adjective or action. The "monster phrase" was a combination of a movement portraying creepiness. It was interesting that Mark arranged and staged the dance took the movement that once looked "creepy" and turned into something that suited Catholic school children. This happened with many of the movement phrases. We were challenged to change a movement that had a definite meaning and change the intention so the same movement could transform into something drastically different. This could not have happened if it were not for the collaboration between dancers, and our ability to adapt the movement to suit the choreographer's vision.

This piece was similar to a theatre performance which I have had no experience with whatsoever. The only thing I had to draw on id that I am a very emotional dancer,

and when the lights and the music come on stage, the emotion that the piece is supposed to portray comes very naturally. When it came time for the performance, this new way to approach performance allowed me to feel completely comfortable executing the choreography to the best of my ability. It was really fun, and we were able to interact with the audience. Performing gave me a new sense of happy energy. I did not feel somber at all, instead I was happy and loved being on stage with all my fellow seniors. This was a slight downfall in the moments we needed to portray scared and timid schoolgirls.

This process challenged my spirit in the times when I was tired and did not feel confident in the choreography and performance. It is really hard for me to take into consideration the struggles of the less advanced dancers, but through channeling my spirit I was able to be a positive influence to them and their dancing capabilities. We were also lucky to have repeated a lot of the same movement throughout the piece. This makes it a little easier for the less experienced dancers to execute the dance. The most trying times were when I was really tired and the weeks I had a really bad groin injury that prevented me from dancing full out. It was very frustrating for me to have to take it easy when I knew a lot of dancers counted on me to know what I was doing because I was one of the more advanced dancers. Also, I sometimes struggle with being in the moment through tech and lighting rehearsals. It was always a challenge to stay focused and positive when sitting around for extended periods of time. It was hard for me to get back in the performance mode after the long breaks in stage rehearsals, but when focusing on the body, mind, spirit connection the breaks and event the performance of the piece went by so quickly and we seemed to dance as a unit.

There was an energy that extended through every dancer and out into the audience. I had a blast in my last faculty concert. It was a great experience; one that I will cherish forever; especially the small moments on stage that only the cast understood and appreciated.

It was amazing to see the transformation of Mark's movement style from class to his choreography. His growth as a choreographer and teacher encouraged us to grow as dancers. I set goals that I did know if I could achieve and I had fears that I did not know if I could overcome. My main goal was to try to get Mark's choreographic vision across to a number of audiences. I wanted to find commonalities with each cast member. Most of all, I wanted to be able to learn from the other dancers as well as inspire them to reach their own personal goals. Through collaboration with the other dancers and the choreographer, I was able to feel like I accomplished my goals. My fear was that Mark's piece was going to look messy and out of control. The music was very hard to count so that posed a slight problem in the cleaning process because every dancer heard the music differently. There were also so many dancers on stage at once and it was really hard to stay together; especially, because each dancer had a different quality of movement. At many instances, Mark never specified the exact way the movements should look so there are many variations. This was either going to be a positive and effective choreographic style or it was going to look sloppy and the theme would as a result be misinterpreted. Through talking with the choreographer about the intension of the movement and collaborating with the other dancers in the piece, we were able to execute the dance in a relatively organized and unified manner.

I learned the most about different learning styles and learning patterns of myself and the dancers around me. Every single dancer learns a little different; some pick up the choreography and stylistic details quickly and can execute the choreography with specificity almost immediately. Others pick up the choreography quickly and execute the choreography with their own stylistic choices. This can be very interesting if the choreographer is not looking for specificity. By making artistic choices, dancers can enhance the one plain choreography into something exciting and intriguing. However, if a choreographer asks a dancer to execute the choreography with specificity, this can be a negative quality for a dancer to possess. There are also dancers who do not pick up the choreography quickly. This could be because they are paying close attention to detail and trying to execute the choreography exactly as it was demonstrated, or it could be that the dancer does not comprehend the movement style as well as others. This is where teamwork comes in handy; it is our job as dancers in a piece to work together and find a way to help everyone execute the choreography the same as one another. By working together, you can surprise and inspire the choreographer and the piece can turn into something more beautiful than was ever imagined. In our case, the dance turned into a much more intricate piece with a somber and abstract quality of movement, and a definite storyline.

During the rehearsal and performance I was able to spend my time focusing on studying the learning styles and learning patterns of myself, and the dancers around me. The journey was full of excitement and learning moments and I grew in my body, mind and spirit. I have grown so much as a human being in my four years of collegiate

study, the only question I still have is how much growth I can achieve in my dancing after graduating from Loyola Marymount University.

Conversation With the Choreographer

When I asked Mark Tomasic about his choreographic style and the story behind *Somnium Dissulto* his response was very unique. He believes it is not possible to obtain a dance filled with depth and intricacy without a certain amount of collaboration between the choreographer and the dancers. He said that the most stimulating choreography comes when you give the dancers a structured improvisation and exploration before you make any ideas about the dance being composed.

The next most important thing is trust and communication between the dancers and the choreographer. He often asks dancers to recall movements from a previous weeks rehearsal work. There are so many times when his memory fails and it is up to the dancers to recreate his vision. He must trust the dancers will be able to recall and execute every phrase of learned material.

The composition and staging of the piece is very important to Mark also. He often has a small movement vocabulary that repeats itself in various patterns and at various levels or tempos. This repetition is what gives the dance depth while allowing the audience to feel comfortable and engaged in what they are watching.

The story behind the dance completely changed from when we started. He originally envisioned that the piece would be full of joy and optimism. Through collaboration with the dancers and composition techniques, we were able to produce a more somber, eerie and frantic at times piece. He believed the dance turned out to be much more interesting and unexpected. The story of looking for a way out of a place

we are all too familiar with was something we were all able to relate to. The fact that we added an emotion, that in some ways contrasted the typical feelings associated with this type of scenario, gave the piece depth and intricacy.

***Somnium Dissulto* Photographs**

Photos by: Leslie Irwin





Dance in Medicine

Dance plays an extremely important role in many healthcare practices. It is a nonverbal language that offers information about what is going on in a physically or mentally injured body or mind. Dance Movement Therapy, and therapy used to benefit people suffering from disease and pain are examples of the use of dance as medicine. This form of therapy, which is taught in a wide array of situations, goes further than just centering the body. Specialized treatments of Dance therapy and technique can help cure and aid many types of diseases and disabilities.¹

Dance therapy is the beneficial use of movement to improve the mental and physical well being of a person. It focuses on the connection between the mind and body to promote health and healing through an expressive therapy.² Dance movement therapists are educated to verbally assist patients through remedial growth in emotions and feelings brought to the surface through dance. Dance Movement Therapy is practiced in places such as mental health rehabilitation centers, cancer treatment centers, nursing homes, and other health promotion programs. Dance therapy is used in a variety of health disciplines. It is used to aid people who suffer from social, emotional, cognitive, or physical concerns and is often used as a part of the recovery process for people with chronic illness.³

There is outstanding evidence that dance plays a beneficial role in sustaining balance and improving movement in patients with Parkinson's disease. Patients with Parkinson's disease, a progressive movement disorder that involves loss of specific nerve cells in the brain, often find it difficult to initiate movement, or stop once started.⁴ There is a growing trend of dance as therapy for Parkinson's disease. For example, Chicago's Hubbard Dance Company established the Parkinson's Project. The Parkinson's Project uses contemporary dance techniques to work to slow the progress of the disease. Parkinson's Disease expert Dr. Monique Giroux states, "Many people with Parkinson's find it becomes easier, has a more natural flow, and is easier to initiate movement when accompanied by music."⁵ Dr. Daniele Volpe, who specializes in movement disorders, observed that a man suffering from Parkinson's disease was able to control his movements while performing an Irish dance.⁶ This form of dance was found to have many benefits on Parkinson's patients that had difficulty with movements that involved changing direction and also improved balance.

Physically, Dance Movement Therapy can provide exercise, improve mobility and muscle coordination, and reduce muscle tension. Emotionally, dance therapy is reported to improve self-awareness, self-confidence, and is an outlet for communicating feelings.⁷ Studies have been done at the American Cancer Society that show a positive effect of Dance Movement Therapy on cancer patients. The American Cancer Society states that although dance therapy has not undergone thorough scientific study to determine its therapeutic value for people with cancer, many doctors have observed significant benefits

among people who have participated in dance therapy. Participating in dance therapy can be an effective form of distraction as well. Thinking about and creating art is proven to help to distract an individual from focusing on thoughts of pain and anxiety.⁸ Creating art in the form of dance can help patients' express painful thoughts or memories possibly related to their cancer diagnosis. This also helps patients cope with the difficulties during the cancer treatment process. In a study done in Hong Kong, dance movement therapy, had a profound effect on the healing process in cancer patients. Where a more in-depth approach such as authentic movement has been used, dance movement therapy has helped significantly to increase participants' energy and reduce fatigue. Objective and self-perceived subjective improvements have also been found to patients' mood, body image, and self-esteem. Participants indicated that they have increased sense of hope, ease, strength and social support, while negative mood and worry about future was decreased. Although Dance Movement Therapy is a completely new modality of psychotherapy for most Hong Kong people, the high participation rate and the positive feedback from participants indicated that the program was well-received by Chinese cancer patients. A significant reduction in perceived stress, and a positive change in self-esteem, also demonstrated the beneficial effect of the program.⁹

In traditional psychological therapy, patients are encouraged to confide in a therapist about traumatic or painful experiences that may be hidden in the mind. This acceptance is proven to be an important part of the psychological healing process.¹⁰ Using this idea, dance therapy challenges patients to create

dance to confront hidden emotion. This form of therapy provides patients with a more abstract way to cope with emotional conflicts, increase self-awareness, and express unspoken and often unconscious concerns about their illness.¹¹ Many Dance Movement therapists believe this type of therapy works, in part, because, "the act of creating art influences brain wave patterns and the substances released by the brain."¹² It helps people express hidden emotions, reduce stress, and provides a sense of freedom.

Beate Becker, a dance therapist, uses her deep understanding of body motion in her work with individuals who suffer from psychiatric disorders. She established a group program, Supportive Treatment of Elderly Persons, where she works with formerly hospitalized psychiatric patients now living in a traditional community. She teaches simple "reaching out" exercises to her class where participants are encouraged to stretch their hands toward each other and move together as a circular unit. In these specialized classes, it has been seen that the entire groups' movement quickly falls in time with the rhythm of the music. The music and the circle format provide structure and a sense of safety.¹³ The movements also help to trigger feelings that allow the group to make contact with the healthy part of their personalities. Becker states, "We want to help them accept the sad, harsh things that have happened to them - to integrate these things without cutting them off"¹⁴ During dance therapy, patients process what is bothering them more easily. It has been documented that patients are able to talk about a distinct problem and move through it. It has also been noted that after dance therapy patients are more verbal about things, such as their emotions and

feelings, during psychotherapy sessions.¹⁵

The physical benefits of dance therapy as exercise are apparent and well documented. Experts have shown that the physical activity in dance is known to increase endorphins, which are special neurotransmitters in the brain, which create a state of well being.¹⁶ The amount of total body movement that occurs while dancing also enhances the functions of other body systems, such as circulatory, respiratory, skeletal, and muscular systems. Dance therapy is a form of light to moderate exercise involves external cues from music, and specific, repeated choreographic steps. Dance requires dynamic adjustments in balance, and coordination, which are proven movement rehabilitation techniques.¹⁷

There are many dance techniques that are capable of aiding in pain rehabilitation. For example, through the Alexander technique, patients have been able to remove harmful bodily tension. The Alexander Technique is a method that works to change movement habits in peoples' everyday activities. It is a simple method for improving range of movement, balance, support and coordination.¹⁸ The technique teaches the use of the appropriate amount of effort for particular daily activities. Lillian Barbeito, certified Alexander Technique instructor claims,

The Alexander Technique is an intelligent way to solve body problems.

Many people are mystified by their own back pain, excess tension or lack of coordination. They often see problems in their joints or muscles as structural, unchangeable. But, as they learn the Technique, they are surprised that they really can make lasting

changes in the way they walk, their degree of muscular tension or the shape of their posture. They learn how dynamic and changeable the body really is. They find that, by learning the Technique, they can improve their overall movement and achieve optimal health for both body and mind.¹⁹

Using the Alexander Technique, patients can learn to eliminate destructive habits, enhance self-awareness, and use their thought process to recover from physical injury. With the Alexander Technique, patients come to understand much more about how the body works, and how to make it work correctly.²⁰ A current example of Alexander technique is its use in medical recovery from repetitive stress injuries. Individuals in musical or sports professions do not only execute simple movements, but movements that need to be very precise. For Working in a very competitive field where the quality of one's performance is mandatory for success cause bodily tension as well. A growing number of musicians and athletes have discovered the Alexander Technique to be an efficient method for ridding unwanted habit patterns that interfere with performance.²¹

Dance therapy has been deemed effective in the treatment of those with physical, and psychological impairments.²² It has been used to treat people with mental and psychological problems and reduction of stress and anxiety for those with chronic diseases and cancer. Dance Movement Therapy and other forms of therapy that aid in rehabilitation from diseases, such as Parkinson's and Cancer,

are also seen to enhance of range of movement, freedom of total body movement, and improvement of mood, body image, and self-esteem.²³ There are many techniques to aid in healthcare processes, but those including Dance Movement Therapy, and therapy used to benefit people suffering from disease and pain are essential in the development of dance as medicine.

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Summary of Dance Studies

Skyler Alexandra-Rachelle McNulty's Dance History

Fundamentals of Dance Composition I and II

- We became familiar with the use of improvisation as a composition tool.
- We worked with students to compose dance phrases both on others and ourselves.
- We learned how essential journaling was after a session; not only to remember feelings and emotions but also movement phrases.
- We discussed key elements of movement that are essential to composing a dance. We talked a lot about minimalism and the impact it has on an audience.
- We did a lot of student critiquing after a phrase was presented to the class.

Dance Styles and Form

- We did a lot of student and teacher critiquing through the course of the composition period of movement.
- We learned about choreographic devices such as repetition, change in tempo, retrograde and translocation to enhance our choreography.
- We learned a lot about the relationship between dance and music. You must do a lot of research before using a particular piece of music to ensure you use a impactful quality of movement.
- We worked in groups of two or three to choreograph dances to an assigned piece of movement. We had to pay close attention to the history, mood and composition of the music, and then match the movement, story and spatial patterns of the dance.
- We were able to learn about and produce site-specific work.

Laban Movement Analysis- (I completed Movement Analysis at MMC)

- We learned a language that was written to be a universal language to describe human movement.
- We learned the history behind Laban Movement Analysis and the division of movement into Effort, Shape and Space.
- We learned about the notations that stemmed from Laban, such as Motif notation.
- We were able to choreograph and perform dances and notate the movements and qualities.
- We used everyday movements and notated them; then saw if through your notation, others could understand what the movement was.

Music for Dance/Drumming

- We learned many African Chants and drumming rhythms.
- We learned how to maintain a constant speed and rhythm with an entire class full of drums, and reproduce patterns lead by the instructor.
- We learned the different techniques to hit a drum. Each produces a different sound.
- We learned different polyrhythms and how to put them together to form a composition.

To Dance is Human: Dance, Culture and Society

- We learned about the many definitions of culture.
- We learned about culture through assigned readings and reflections.
- We had the opportunity to listen to a variety of different speakers about their culture and were able to participate in chants and dances.
- Through learning about other cultures, we found a lot out about our own culture and what makes us who we are both as a person and as a dancer.
- We learned that dance is both a cultural and social phenomenon.
- We learned how to have a broad view of the world around us.
- By discovering our story, and both writing and sharing intimate details with our classmates, we became more in-tuned with our personal story and the mind body soul connection.

Dance History

- We learned about the history of dance, where it originated from and how different styles are connected

- We spent a good portion of the semester working on a research paper that would enhance our knowledge in a field of interest.
- We took part in many class discussions. This type of student teacher dialogue really enhanced each student's ability to retain important historical information.

Kinesiology I and II (I completed Anatomy and Physiology at MMC)

- **Anatomy and Physiology**
- We learned about the bones of the body and how they function.
- We were able to visualize the muscles, tendons, tissue, and bones through dissection.
- We learned correct terminology and pronunciation of the major muscle and bone groups that allow us to move
- We wrote a scientifically accurate research paper on the structure of the body and how it works.
- **Kinesiology II**
- We learned about the bones of the body.
- We learned about the insertions and origins of muscles and their actions.
- We were able to apply our knowledge of anatomy and physiology to dance positions and movements. We were able to gain an understanding of the correct way for the body to move to avoid injury.

Principles of Teaching

- We learned the basic techniques of teaching dance in schools, private studios, and agencies.
- We learned what the certificate requirements there are for teaching dance at different levels of school. We used the standards for public high school to design lesson plans for Dance in a Physical Education class.
- Using one of our lesson plans, we were able to conduct a half hour long class to our fellow students, using teaching techniques such as the scaffolding method to aid us and allow students to easily understand the concepts of the class.
- Students gained an understanding of how topics within dance curriculum are organized and adapted for students.

Dance as Social Action

- I taught free dance classes for children back home in Santa Cruz. There were many underprivileged kids, and I was able to show how dance can improve their well-being. I also taught the children how to behave in a structured class setting.

Philosophy of Arts or similar course

- **Urban Ecology**
- We worked on identifying our impact as humans on the world
- We as humans are able to change landscapes for the better. In a sense, we are the artists and nature is our canvas.

Improvisation- (I completed Contact Improvisation at Cabrillo College)

- We did a lot of trust exercises with the class; experimenting with every member in the classroom.
- We worked on site-specific movement and compared the difference between movement inside a building and outside, for example in a grass field.
- We did a lot of exploration with movement and analyzed the choices we have in movement alone and when working with other dancers.
- We attended outside dance performances that allowed us to get involved in the art that occurred in the area.

Careers on Dance

- We are learning how to write effective introductory emails to potential employers and effective follow-up emails to current or future employers.
- We are learning what is to have an effective biography, resume, headshot and business card that can be updated over time.
- We will be able to create a reel, online portfolio or work sample .
- We are beginning to understand the self-awareness, organization, skills, and self-motivation it takes to have a successful career in dance or a career related to dance.

Ballet

- We were given the opportunity to continue our study of ballet through various approaches. For example, a progressive approach to technique.

- We demonstrated proficient ballet technique, personal style, and accurate execution of ballet movement.
- We learned the importance of self-awareness and self-motivation in our dancing.
- We explored both traditional and progressive approaches to ballet technique and artistry.
- We improved our body placement and alignment by creating space and mobility in joints, power in the muscles and flexibility
- We focused on the use of port de bras and epaulement and we improved our coordination and connectedness of the entire body, and observed its use of space and energy
- We learned new ways to approach musicality and learned the importance of staying with the music.
- With a good effort and attitude, we were able to execute difficult combinations and grow as a class.

Modern

- We learned various styles of modern technique,
- We learned repertory ranging from Bill T. Jones to BODYTRAFFIC.
- We explored Counter technique, and the Alexander Technique
- We are able to demonstrate modern dance with personal artistry, and clear, dynamic and efficient movement.
- We improved our body placement and alignment by creating space and mobility in joints, power in the muscles and flexibility
- We explored the head tail connection and incorporated it into our class work.

Jazz

- We expanded our knowledge of jazz techniques, performance and vocabulary.
- We learned how to execute different styles of jazz movement quickly and accurately, which allowed us to improve our articulation of movement and technical skills.
- We participated in a structured class format and were expected to pick up new material quickly.
- We were tested on influential people to jazz and vocabulary to expand our knowledge of the jazz field.

World Dance

- **African Dance**
- We learned the history behind many African dances. We studied songs and drumming rhythms and also executed many traditional dances. We were able to combine all these elements into a fun, energetic and authentic performance in "Encore."
- **Martial Arts**
- We learned the skills and mindset of a martial artist. We practiced styles such as Tae Kwan Doe, Karate and Hapkido. We also researched many other forms of martial arts.
- We learned about the history of different martial arts and what makes each style unique.
- We practiced discipline and precision in class.

Tap

- I have not participated in this course

Yoga

- I have not participated in this course

Pilates

- We participated in conditioning designed by Joseph Pilates.
- Through this method we were able to build body strength as well as body awareness and alignment.
- We focused on the mind body connection by emphasizing breathing and the correct core alignment.
- We gained deep abdominal strength through both exercises on the floor and the Pilates reformer table.
- We developed a better understanding of how each bone, muscle and joint of the body works through various exercises.

References

- course syllabi

Aesthetic Statement

Before I began my collegiate study, dance was merely my passion. If you would have asked me to specify this simple phrase four years ago my answer would have surely been, "Well I don't know, it just is." My time at Loyola Marymount University has completely changed my perception of all aspects of dance. I now understand that dance is an emotional language in itself. I am able to articulate where exactly my passion for dance stems from, I know how to express how I feel when I execute or watch a dance, and most importantly, I know how much time, energy, research and study it takes to make dance look and feel aesthetically captivating.

Through my intensive study of dance I have come to the realization that it can be used to express emotions in times when words cannot. It is as if in these past four years I have learned a completely new language with dance being my sole vocabulary. I am now fluent in the language of dance and can clearly express myself through movement as well as speak and be understood by audiences through performance. I have found my own unique and creative voice, and I have learned how to best express it. Through the constant examination of who I am as a speaker of dance, I have discovered that in order to be broadly understood, I must take everything I am taught in life and apply it to dance in a way that makes sense. Relating my life experiences to dance has allowed me to develop a truthful and understandable dance vocabulary and be able share it

with confidence and sincerity. When dancing, I am at my most vulnerable; the truth can be seen through my eyes, the joy through my mouth, the honesty through my limbs, and the passion through my chest.

Since I was young, dance has been a constant in my life. The consistency turned into routine without even blinking an eye. In my teenage years, dance became more of a habit than a love. My schedule was always school, dance, homework, sleep; repeat. I lost my sense of adventure and drive to learn. Dance was second nature in a way. I was unaware of this change because I had no idea how to articulate what exactly it was that I loved about dance. Collegiate dance has pushed me to articulate the aspects of dance I excel in and those I need to challenge myself in. Dance is my passion because it encompasses so much more than just moving. I have learned that elements such as repetition, motif and retrograde can greatly enhance the appearance of a work. I have studied motif and Laban Notation and can now illustrate a dance rather than trying to find words that sometimes do not even exist. I can watch a dancer and explain where they hold their tension, and can suggest ways to distribute the tautness. I understand how to align my body to provide the most effective kinesthetic movement. Without the connection of the body, mind and spirit none of these learning revelations would have been possible. It is my passion for dance that has lead me to discover other interests such as Medicine and Volunteer work; I now know that I am passionate about helping others that are less fortunate than myself. Loyola Marymount University has pushed me to move and think in ways that were not natural to me, and because of this I have

tried things I was once scared of. As a result of taking risks, I have discovered so many things about my capabilities and myself.

Before coming to Loyola Marymount I could watch a dance and simply confirm if it was "good" or "bad." I had no explanation for why I thought this; it was just an automatic fact. It was the same for when I performed, I either danced "well" or "poorly," there was no reasoning behind my opinion. My collegiate dance career has encouraged me to investigate the deeper meaning to why I "like" a dance or feel I performed "well." It is not only the movement that makes a dance captivating, it is the lights, sound, costume and performance quality. Without any one of these elements a dance can be perceived drastically different. I am especially drawn the performance aspect of dancing. To my eye, there are three types of dancers. One who executes movement to the counts, words, or melody of the movement as they are instructed. A second who loves to dance and can draw an audience in through emotion and a unique movement quality. Lastly, there is the dancer that is in-love with dancing, and you cannot take your eyes off of this type. They have a connection to dance that goes beyond the steps they are given. Dance becomes part of who they are and their body becomes a paintbrush illustrating a brilliant piece of art. I always strive to be in-love with dance, but it is something that cannot be forced. I am often critical of my movement and performance. I watch hours of class footage and dissect every misplaced hand, examine how my transitions could be more smooth, and study the moments I need to connect with the audience more. Although, I am always striving to improve, the constant criticism can wear on my love for dance.

It begins to feel like a mandatory job rather than a part of me that I cannot live without.

I have come to the realization that dance is the basis of all my interests. It is the foundation of the individual I am today. Dance has taught me to have a strong work ethic and responsibility. I come to dance class on-time everyday, ready to work my hardest. This is a skill I am able to apply to all aspects of my life. I have become an important part of a team; if I slack, I understand it affects everyone around me. I have learned to take correction and apply it quickly, and I also know that people expect high quality work and it is my responsibility to dance to my fullest potential each and every day. Dance has also taught me to be open to multiple perspectives. Where one teacher might ask you to move in a certain way, another may completely contradict that advice. It is my job as a dancer to adapt to many styles of dance. I understand now that there are many different ways to approach dance technique and artistry, and each teacher has a different way of imparting the skills needed to be successful. It is my job as the student to be flexible, adaptable, and open to trying all styles of dance. Dance is hard work, and it has instilled in me, a sense of responsibility. I am able to take responsibility for my own actions. I understand it is no one's fault but my own if I do not live up to mine or others' expectations.

Loyola Marymount University has taught me the deeper meaning of dance. It is an emotional language that can be articulated and understood, and is a solid foundation for a successful life. Dance has taught me importance of investing time, energy, research and study into everything I do. No matter what

field I enter after graduation, the habits I have developed from a foundation in the dance program at Loyola Marymount University will serve me well.

Career Search

Post Graduate Service Opportunities In Healthcare

Jesuit Volunteer Corps

Jesuit Volunteer Corps supports organizations that provide direct service to people who are poor and marginalized by placing volunteers at schools, non-profits, and other sites around the world. Idealistic, inquisitive, mission-minded JVs bring energy and hope to the individuals and organizations they serve and gain valuable life skills, insights, and connections. During their service, they immerse in and reflect on four Catholic, Ignatian values: spiritual growth, simple living, community with other JVs and those they serve, and the pursuit of social justice.

<http://www.jesuitvolunteers.org/about-jvc/jvc-is>

Cabrini Mission Corps

Mission is central to CMC. They receive their mission from the Heart of Jesus who asks for people to communicate the love, compassion and mercy of God. CMC's response to this invitation is expansive, diverse and creative, while at the same time, being personal and specific, as they seek to reach out to "one heart at a time."

<http://cabrinimissioncorps.org>

Covenant House Service

Covenant House was founded in 1972 with the simple, profound mission to help homeless kids escape the streets. Today it is the largest privately funded charity in the Americas providing loving care and vital services to homeless, abandoned, abused, trafficked, and exploited youth.

<http://www.covenanthouse.org/about-homeless-charity>

Good Shepherd Volunteers

Good Shepherd Volunteers provides full-time volunteers with the opportunity to use their God-given talents to serve women, adolescents, and children affected by poverty, violence, and neglect. GSV has placements in the United States and internationally in a variety of fields: domestic violence, fair trade, economic justice, youth counseling, foster care, after-school programs, and education.

<http://www.gsvolunteers.org>

Skyler McNulty

Senior Thesis

October 11, 2013

Dance in Medicine

Dance plays an extremely important role in many healthcare practices. It is a nonverbal language that offers information about what is going on in a physically or mentally injured body or mind. Dance Movement Therapy is one of the main examples of the use of dance as medicine. This form of therapy, which is taught in a wide array of situations, goes further than just centering the body. Specialized treatments of Dance therapy and technique can help cure and aid many types of diseases and disabilities.

Dance therapy is the beneficial use of movement to improve the mental and physical well being of a person. It focuses on the connection between the mind and body to promote health and healing through an expressive therapy. Dance movement therapists are educated to verbally assist patients through remedial growth in emotions and feelings brought to the surface through dance. Dance Movement Therapy is practiced in places such as mental health rehabilitation centers, cancer treatment centers, nursing homes, and other health promotion programs. Dance therapy is used in a variety of health disciplines. It is used to aid people who suffer from social, emotional, cognitive, or physical concerns and is often used as a part of the recovery process for people with chronic illness.

There is outstanding evidence that dance plays a beneficial role in sustaining balance and improving movement in patients with Parkinson's disease. Patients with

Parkinson's disease, a progressive movement disorder that involves loss of specific nerve cells in the brain, often find it difficult to initiate movement, or stop once started. There is a growing trend of dance as therapy for Parkinson's disease. For example, Chicago's Hubbard Dance Company established the Parkinson's Project. The Parkinson's Project uses contemporary dance techniques to work to slow the progress of the disease.

Parkinson's Disease expert Dr. Monique Giroux states, "Many people with Parkinson's find it becomes easier, has a more natural flow, and is easier to initiate movement when accompanied by music." Dr. Daniele Volpe, who specializes in movement disorders, observed that a man suffering from Parkinson's disease was able to control his movements while performing an Irish dance. This form of dance was found to have many benefits on Parkinson's patients that had difficulty with movements that involved changing direction and also improved balance.

Physically, dance therapy can provide exercise, improve mobility and muscle coordination, and reduce muscle tension. Emotionally, dance therapy is reported to improve self-awareness, self-confidence, and is an outlet for communicating feelings. Studies have been done at the American Cancer Society that show a positive effect of Dance Movement Therapy on cancer patients. The American Cancer Society states that although dance therapy has not undergone thorough scientific study to determine its therapeutic value for people with cancer, many doctors have observed significant benefits among people who have participated in dance therapy. Participating in dance therapy can be an effective form of distraction as well. Thinking about and creating art is proven to help to distract an individual from focusing on thoughts of pain and anxiety. Creating art in the form of dance can help patients' express painful thoughts or memories possibly

dance ed/
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therapy)

Clarify
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give
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the
study

related to their cancer diagnosis. This also helps patients cope with the difficulties during the cancer treatment process.

In traditional psychological therapy, patients are encouraged to confide in a therapist about traumatic or painful experiences that may be hidden in the mind. This acceptance is proven to be an important part of the psychological healing process. Using this idea, dance therapy challenges patients to create dance to confront hidden emotion. This form of therapy provides patients with a more abstract way to cope with emotional conflicts, increase self-awareness, and express unspoken and often unconscious concerns about their illness. Many Dance Movement therapists believe this type of therapy works, in part, because, "the act of creating art influences brain wave patterns and the substances released by the brain." It helps people express hidden emotions, reduce stress, and provides a sense of freedom.

Beate Becker, a dance therapist, uses her deep understanding of body motion in her work with individuals who suffer from psychiatric disorders. She established a group program, Supportive Treatment of Elderly Persons, where she works with formerly hospitalized psychiatric patients now living in a traditional community. She teaches simple "reaching out" exercises to her class where participants are encouraged to stretch their hands toward each other and move together as a circular unit. In these specialized classes, it has been seen that the entire groups' movement quickly falls in time with the rhythm of the music. The music and the circle format provide structure and a sense of safety. The movements also help to trigger feelings that allow the group to make contact with the healthy part of their personalities. Becker states, "We want to help them accept

the sad, harsh things that have happened to them - to integrate these things without cutting them off" During dance therapy, patients process what is bothering them more easily. It has been documented that patients are able to talk about a distinct problem and move through it. It has also been noted that after dance therapy patients are more verbal during psychotherapy sessions.

great example

give examples here.

The physical benefits of dance therapy as exercise are apparent and well documented. Experts have shown that the physical activity in dance is known to increase endorphins, which are special neurotransmitters in the brain, which create a state of well being. The amount of total body movement that occurs while dancing also enhances the functions of other body systems, such as circulatory, respiratory, skeletal, and muscular systems. Dance therapy is a form of light to moderate exercise involves external cues from music, and specific, repeated choreographic steps. Dance requires dynamic adjustments in balance, and coordination, which are proven movement rehabilitation techniques.

There are many dance techniques that are capable of aiding in rehabilitation. For example, through the Alexander technique, patients have been able to remove harmful bodily tension. The Alexander Technique is a method that works to change movement habits in peoples' everyday activities. It is a simple method for improving range of movement, balance, support and coordination. The technique teaches the use of the appropriate amount of effort for particular daily activities. Lillian Barbeito, certified Alexander Technique instructor claims,

The Alexander Technique is an intelligent way to solve body problems.

Many people are mystified by their own back pain, excess tension or lack of coordination. They often see problems in their joints or muscles as structural, unchangeable. But, as they learn the Technique, they are surprised that they really can make lasting changes in the way they walk, their degree of muscular tension or the shape of their posture. They learn how dynamic and changeable the body really is. They find that, by learning the Technique, they can improve their overall movement and achieve optimal health for both body and mind.

Using the Alexander Technique, patients can learn to eliminate destructive habits, enhance self-awareness, and use their thought process to recover from physical injury. With the Alexander Technique, patients come to understand much more about how the body works, and how to make it work correctly.

Dance therapy has been deemed effective in the treatment of those with physical, and psychological impairments. It has been used to treat people with mental and psychological problems and reduction of stress and anxiety for those with chronic diseases and cancer. Dance therapy and technique is also seen to enhance of range of movement, freedom of total body movement, and improvement of mood, body image, and self-esteem.

do you
have
examples of AT
health care
settings?
I don't
think
it's
for you people

*Need Citations, End notes + Bibliography
* It appears that your topic is Dance Movement Therapy - however,
two examples, Hubbard Parkinson's Project and Alexander
Technique are not DMT. There are differences, and
we can do dance as an informal healthcare. DMT,
and rehabilitative approaches, such as AT. Please come -
or email - so I can assist.

Skyler McNulty

Senior Thesis

December 13, 2013

Dance in Medicine

Dance plays an extremely important role in many healthcare practices. It is a nonverbal language that offers information about what is going on in a physically or mentally injured body or mind. Dance Movement Therapy, and therapy used to benefit people suffering from disease and pain are examples of the use of dance as medicine.

This form of therapy, which is taught in a wide array of situations, goes further than just centering the body. Specialized treatments of Dance therapy and technique can help cure and aid many types of diseases and disabilities.¹

Dance therapy is the beneficial use of movement to improve the mental and physical well being of a person. It focuses on the connection between the mind and body to promote health and healing through an expressive therapy.² Dance movement therapists are educated to verbally assist patients through remedial growth in emotions and feelings brought to the surface through dance. Dance Movement Therapy is practiced in places such as mental health rehabilitation centers, cancer treatment centers, nursing homes, and other health promotion programs. Dance therapy is used in a variety of health disciplines. It is used to aid people who suffer from social, emotional, cognitive, or physical concerns and is often used as a part of the recovery process for people with chronic illness.³

There is outstanding evidence that dance plays a beneficial role in sustaining balance and improving movement in patients with Parkinson's disease. Patients with Parkinson's disease, a progressive movement disorder that involves loss of specific nerve cells in the brain, often find it difficult to initiate movement, or stop once started.⁴ There is a growing trend of dance as therapy for Parkinson's disease. For example, Chicago's Hubbard Dance Company established the Parkinson's Project. The Parkinson's Project uses contemporary dance techniques to work to slow the progress of the disease. Parkinson's Disease expert Dr. Monique Giroux states, "Many people with Parkinson's find it becomes easier, has a more natural flow, and is easier to initiate movement when accompanied by music."⁵ Dr. Daniele Volpe, who specializes in movement disorders, observed that a man suffering from Parkinson's disease was able to control his movements while performing an Irish dance.⁶ This form of dance was found to have many benefits on Parkinson's patients that had difficulty with movements that involved changing direction and also improved balance.

DMT
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dance as
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different
approaches
Clarify

Physically, Dance Movement Therapy can provide exercise, improve mobility and muscle coordination, and reduce muscle tension. Emotionally, dance therapy is reported to improve self-awareness, self-confidence, and is an outlet for communicating feelings.⁷ Studies have been done at the American Cancer Society that show a positive effect of Dance Movement Therapy on cancer patients. The American Cancer Society states that although dance therapy has not undergone thorough scientific study to determine its therapeutic value for people with cancer, many doctors have observed significant benefits among people who have participated in dance therapy. Participating in dance therapy can be an effective form of distraction as well. Thinking about and

creating art is proven to help to distract an individual from focusing on thoughts of pain and anxiety.⁸ Creating art in the form of dance can help patients' express painful thoughts or memories possibly related to their cancer diagnosis. This also helps patients cope with the difficulties during the cancer treatment process. In a study done in Hong Kong, dance movement therapy had a profound effect on the healing process in cancer patients. Where a more in-depth approach such as authentic movement has been used, dance movement therapy has helped significantly to increase participants' energy and reduce fatigue. Objective and self-perceived subjective improvements have also been found to patients' mood, body image, and self-esteem. Participants indicated that they have increased sense of hope, ease, strength and social support, while negative mood and worry about future was decreased. Although Dance Movement Therapy is a completely new modality of psychotherapy for most Hong Kong people, the high participation rate and the positive feedback from participants indicated that the program was well-received by Chinese cancer patients. A significant reduction in perceived stress, and a positive change in self-esteem, also demonstrated the beneficial effect of the program.⁹

what
did
they do
in
the study?

In traditional psychological therapy, patients are encouraged to confide in a therapist about traumatic or painful experiences that may be hidden in the mind. This acceptance is proven to be an important part of the psychological healing process.¹⁰ Using this idea, dance therapy challenges patients to create dance to confront hidden emotion. This form of therapy provides patients with a more abstract way to cope with emotional conflicts, increase self-awareness, and express unspoken and often unconscious concerns about their illness.¹¹ Many Dance Movement therapists believe this type of therapy works, in part, because, "the act of creating art influences brain wave

patterns and the substances released by the brain."¹² It helps people express hidden emotions, reduce stress, and provides a sense of freedom.

Beate Becker, a dance therapist, uses her deep understanding of body motion in her work with individuals who suffer from psychiatric disorders. She established a group program, Supportive Treatment of Elderly Persons, where she works with formerly hospitalized psychiatric patients now living in a traditional community. She teaches simple "reaching out" exercises to her class where participants are encouraged to stretch their hands toward each other and move together as a circular unit. In these specialized classes, it has been seen that the entire groups' movement quickly falls in time with the rhythm of the music. The music and the circle format provide structure and a sense of safety.¹³ The movements also help to trigger feelings that allow the group to make contact with the healthy part of their personalities. Becker states, "We want to help them accept the sad, harsh things that have happened to them - to integrate these things without cutting them off"¹⁴ During dance therapy, patients process what is bothering them more easily. It has been documented that patients are able to talk about a distinct problem and move through it. It has also been noted that after dance therapy patients are more verbal about things, such as their emotions and feelings, during psychotherapy sessions.¹⁵

The physical benefits of dance therapy as exercise are apparent and well documented. Experts have shown that the physical activity in dance is known to increase endorphins, which are special neurotransmitters in the brain, which create a state of well being.¹⁶ The amount of total body movement that occurs while dancing also enhances the functions of other body systems, such as circulatory, respiratory, skeletal, and muscular systems. Dance therapy is a form of light to moderate exercise involves external cues

from music, and specific, repeated choreographic steps. Dance requires dynamic adjustments in balance, and coordination, which are proven movement rehabilitation techniques.¹⁷

There are many dance techniques that are capable of aiding in pain rehabilitation. For example, through the Alexander technique, patients have been able to remove harmful bodily tension. The Alexander Technique is a method that works to change movement habits in peoples' everyday activities. It is a simple method for improving range of movement, balance, support and coordination.¹⁸ The technique teaches the use of the appropriate amount of effort for particular daily activities. Lillian Barbeito, certified Alexander Technique instructor claims,

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Using the Alexander Technique, patients can learn to eliminate destructive habits, enhance self-awareness, and use their thought process to recover from physical injury. With the Alexander Technique, patients come to understand much more about how the body works, and how to make it work correctly.²⁰ A current example of Alexander

technique is its use in medical recovery from repetitive stress injuries. Individuals in musical or sports professions do not only execute simple movements, but movements that need to be very precise. For Working in a very competitive field where the quality of one's performance is mandatory for success cause bodily tension as well. A growing number of musicians and athletes have discovered the Alexander Technique to be an efficient method for ridding unwanted habit patterns that interfere with performance.²¹

Dance therapy has been deemed effective in the treatment of those with physical, and psychological impairments.²² It has been used to treat people with mental and psychological problems and reduction of stress and anxiety for those with chronic diseases and cancer. Dance Movement Therapy and other forms of therapy that aid in rehabilitation from diseases, such as Parkinson's and Cancer, are also seen to enhance of range of movement, freedom of total body movement, and improvement of mood, body image, and self-esteem.²³ There are many techniques to aid in healthcare processes, but those including Dance Movement Therapy, and therapy used to benefit people suffering from disease and pain are essential in the development of dance as medicine.

¹ Helen Payne, *Dance Movement Therapy: Theory and Practice*, (London: Tavistock/Routledge, 1992).

² B. Cassileth, *The Alternative Medicine Handbook: The Complete Reference Guide to Alternative and Complementary Therapies*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998).

³ Bonnie Meekums, *Dance Movement Therapy*, (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications Inc.).

⁴ Unknown to Michael J. Fox: Breaking Research Updates, 2013, Therapy for Parkinson's Patients, <https://www.michaeljfox.org>.

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ S. Sandel, "Dance and movement program improves quality-of-life measures in breast cancer survivors.," *Cancer Nurs*, 28 (2005): 301-309,

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Rainow Ho. Research Gate, "Effects of dance movement therapy on Chinese cancer patients: A pilot study in Hong Kong." Last modified October 10, 2005. <http://www.researchgate.net>.

¹⁰ Unknown to Stanford University Medical Center, 2013, Art Therapy, Dance Therapy, Music Therapy, and Imagery, <http://cancer.stanford.edu>.

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¹² Ibid

¹³ Roberta Hershenson. "Dance Therapy Helps Former Psychiatric Patients to Open Up." *The New York Times*, December 11, 1988.

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Unknown to "Who We Are" online forum, American Dance Therapy Association, <http://www.adta.org/about/who.cfm>.

¹⁷ Juliane Strassel, Daniel Cherkin, Lotte Steuten, Karen Sherman, Hubertus Vrijhoef "A Systematic Review of the Evidence for the Effectiveness of Dance Therapy," *Alternative Therapies*, 17, no. 3 (2011): 50,

¹⁸ Lillian Barbeito, "Modern Dance V." (unpublished working paper., Loyola Marymount University, 2013).

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Robert Rickover. "Avoiding Repetitive Strain Injuries." <http://www.alexandertechnique.com> (accessed December 12, 2013).

²² Juliane Strassel, Daniel Cherkin, Lotte Steuten, Karen Sherman, Hubertus Vrijhoef "A Systematic Review of the Evidence for the Effectiveness of Dance Therapy," *Alternative Therapies*, 17, no. 3 (2011): 50,

²³ Ibid

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